

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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to demonstrate the extent to which he had worked for the welfare of the entire village, then offered an opinion as to the wisdom of a certain act or policy. He was never demoted, the Mandan claimed; others younger who had been distinguishing themselves merely replaced the older man in public esteem. A chief's greatness was based on the length of time that his opinions were accepted to the exclusion of all others' opinions. A chief was expected to conform strictly to village and tribal custom.

The day-by-day and calendar round of economic, social, and ceremonial activities were rigidly regulated by tradition. In matters relative to gardening, the Corn Bundle leaders, Goose Society, and females of the various households set their own rules. When public sanction was given a young man by one or more members of the council of older men to perform a certain ceremony and he had made public announcement from a rooftop that he would perform the ceremony, a time was reserved for the ceremony, and the Black Mouths would have prevented any interference. The Mandan believed that quarrels should not arise over schedules for performance of the various ceremonies. The fact is that the Mandan liked to attend ceremonies and believed that bad luck would come to anyone who deviated from the normal pattern of behavior.

The responsibilities for leadership in various Mandan social and ceremonial activities were profusely scattered through the entire population. A person who would be the leader in one activity became a subordinate member of another activity in which he was expected to follow the leader's directions. For instance, when the time arrived for the performance of the Okipa ceremony, the entire population was organized around the officers for that ceremony, while the Black Mouth Society enforced the rules. It is highly improbable that the Black Mouths received any formal instruction. Custom defined the rules of behavior during the Okipa which were known by all except very young children. It was also customary when the enemy were not especially troublesome for the greater part of a village group to leave for a short time to trap eagles. The village would break up into a dozen or more camps, each of which was under the leadership of a male having an eagle-trapping bundle. Regardless of a man's status during other activities, he was subordinate to the

554 leader.⁶ Even the most distinguished war leader, who was one of
 796 the two head chiefs of the village, frequently joined an expedi-
 626 tion under another for the purpose of capturing horses, although
 in this instance recognition was often shown an outstanding
 leader by naming him a co-leader.

622 An essential function of a chief was to mold public opinion so
 that a village could act in unison. A chief was considered emi-
 nent if for a long time under his leadership there had been a
 minimum of dissension in the village. Mandan informants still
 speak of Good Boy, who was chief of Slant Village below the
 Heart River after the first smallpox epidemic. He was able to
 unite the remnants of several villages into a single village and to
 co-ordinate elements with a minimum of friction. He was essen-
 tially a village leader who devoted himself, according to tradi-
 tion, to the rebuilding of the tribe to its former prominence. It
 is significant to note that, a few years after his death, one group
 of Mandan separated from the parent-village and were not re-
 united until Good Boy's son, Four Bears, was elevated to second
 chief.

622 A chief could prevent intervillage or intravillage warfare only
 182 to the extent to which he could inculcate a concept of tribal
 778 unity. Neither a chief nor the council has authority to prevent a
 portion of a village from separating and establishing a separate
 village. Such separations as have occurred have usually been of
 short duration, largely because of the integration of the cere-
 monial structure through the entire tribal population. Although
 each permanent Mandan village was in a large measure a sepa-
 rate economic, social, and ceremonial unit, the villages were not
 entirely independent. The turtle drums, which were considered
 the most sacred objects of the tribe, were held within the Nup-
 tadi band of east-side Mandan, and the other villages were
 obliged to borrow them for ceremonial purposes. Whereas the
 sacred cedar in the center of each village was a symbol of village
 unity, the Mandan considered the turtle drums a symbol of
 tribal unity.

6. Cf. chap. vii, "Eagle-trapping."

SUMMARY

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destroy the Mandans. Sacred myths played an important role 796
in the interpretation of situations arising from time to time. 773
First of all, these myths constituted the traditional history of
the tribe, and the Mandan were accustomed until a few years
ago to return from time to time to these sacred places at and
near the Heart River to examine these shrines. My informants
often remarked that they would have forgotten many of these
stories had they not been able to see for themselves what the
older people had explained.²

The sacred myths expressed a fundamental pattern of con- 773
duct which regulated and to a certain degree regimented the 626 ●
population. The fear of accident or misfortune being ever pres-
ent, those possessing a considerable knowledge of tribal lore
were consulted frequently by those not so well informed. A
young man accustomed to consult his elders on important mat-
ters was considered wise, and the older people would say,
"He will become eminent because he endeavors to regulate his
behavior along the line laid down by the sacred things long
ago."

The sacred myths established psychological relationships be- 796
tween bundles which to the student of Mandan ceremonialism 778
are otherwise not understandable. In the natives' minds certain 773
bundles are related, and, when a ceremony for one of the
bundles of the complex was held, those having bundles believed
to be related were expected to attend. The Old Woman Who
Never Dies rites will illustrate this point. Since this culture hero
formerly cared for her gardens along the Missouri River, the
psychological relationship with the Corn Skull bundles is evi-
dent. The association of the Bear bundles with this rite become
intelligible only when examining the sacred myth in which it is
said that she used the grizzly bear for a dog because she was so
powerful that all animals were her slaves. Additional informa-
tion on this point appears in the accounts of the various cere-
monies which appear above.

Ceremonies were native dramatizations of the sacred myths. 796
In native theory, the details of the ceremony continued un- 773

2. Differences in myths and rites now recognized by the older Mandan probably
represent cultural differences between villages which become apparent only when the
survivors of the Heart River villages united to occupy a single village.

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[302] Mouths were also called "Brave Men's society." They painted their faces black. The Goose women used the same paint, because their society was founded by the same man. When the time came for singing, the first rattler walked ahead and began to sing. Then the drummers took up the song. The next time the second rattler acted in the same manner. The raven-lance bearers had a special song and dance, during which they crossed each other's path.

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535 One summer, when the society wished to give a performance because some Sioux were coming to fight, they stuck two tipi poles into the ground, and tied raven-lances to the top. One of the Soldiers cried, "Kā! Kā! Kā!" This was in imitation of crows. Then some other member went outside the lodge to see which one had cried. Returning, he said, "It is not a living raven, but the raven head on Skunk's lance." Skunk was a very brave man. The people said, "We will find out what this means." Then someone took the lances down, and returned them to their owners. Skunk said, "Hold on, my fellow-members, I wish to know the reason why my lance is singing." He got his associate to accompany him, and both lance officers then went through the village, singing this song: —

"kē'ka, nasarā'rōoca. mī'ō'watē'roc.

"Raven, you sing. I want to die.

"kika're e'henik, ō'ota."

"If you are afraid, go away."

The people hearing Skunk thought him braver than ever. They said to him, "This is your day, do what you wish best." The people encouraged Skunk. When the society started outdoors for a dance, Skunk took the lead, and again sang. A circle was formed. All the people came to watch the performance. Skunk once more sang his song. He danced alone, in a slanting line. These were the words of his song: —

"mīnukarité, nū'tamina'tare hū'miūkāc. i'miīnahēc."

"My friends, our enemies are numerous. I am used to it" [that is, to fight].

When the time came to fight, Skunk struck many coups. This is what the singing of the raven had indicated.

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• 626 In addition to the police functions described by Maximilian, Wounded-face mentions a special duty devolving on the two pipe-bearers. When some villager wished to kill a fellow-tribesman, these officers filled up a pipe, and gave him presents in order to make him desist. Acceptance signified acquiescence in their wishes.

575 Water-chief became a Black Mouth, together with about twenty of his comrades, at thirty; generally, however, the members were older. They

Throughout the ceremony two women whose normal position in the circle was on the right side of the rear officer preserved order in the lodge; the distinctive badge of their office consisted of a skunkskin head band (Fig. 17). 575 626

The object of the ceremony was to lure the buffalo near the fireplace. Once, when the performance took place in a clearing in the woods, one buffalo came directly to the doorway, and was killed on the spot. During the same season a great abundance of buffalo were found in the timber. Apparently, anyone who was desirous of making the buffalo come could take the initiative and ask the society to undertake the performance. 575 789

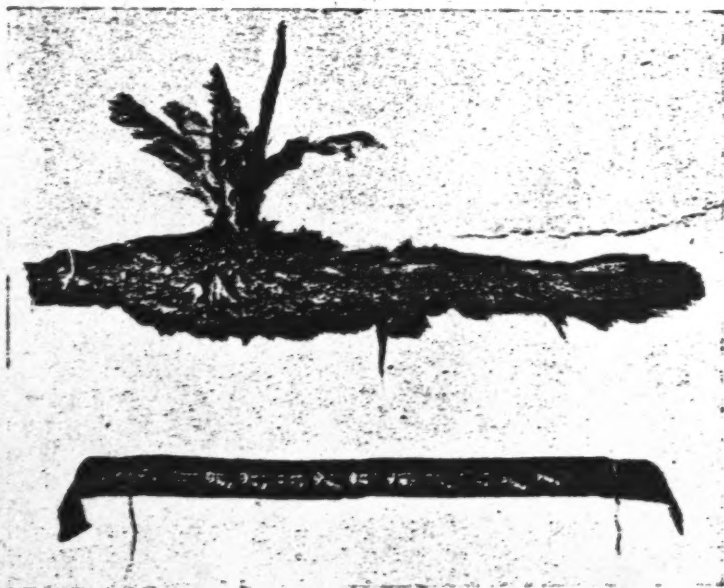


Fig. 17 (50.1-4815, 50.1-4231). Skunkskin Head Band of White Buffalo Cow Society and Head Band of Kilt-Fox Society. Lengths, 79 cm. and 55 cm. 292

Any old member could adopt as many new ones as she wished, and was obliged to provide each tyro with a headdress. Calf-woman obtained one of these headdresses at the time of her adoption, though she was only two years of age. She became the middle officer because her adoptive mother gave her the appropriate calfskin robe. The musicians adopted new musicians who were obliged to pay heavily for the songs. Four of them had drums for instruments, while the remaining one used a rattle of buffalo skin. 575 608 432 [534]

156 further his own ends, nor is there any pressure put upon him to realize ab-
 602 solute ideals. The value of generosity in this perspective, and as defined by the
 431 Indian people, is any act which promotes group welfare. Those persons who do
 work together on such secular affairs as road projects are said to have donated
 their time to the group. At a dance for his son serving in Korea, one man in
 Lone Hill donated "the whitewashing of the school lunch room and the repair
 of the grade school window sashes." As the kinship system embodies the
 primary societal values, a man's position in society is assured if he meets the
 obligations of that system at all public gatherings and in his everyday be-
 [626] havior in the village. If a person behaves in any way that destroys group co-
 57) operation he is not threatened or physically punished. His mother or older
 sister will tell him the right way, and if they are not effective his grandparents
 or other joking relatives will tease and ridicule him into conformity. The
 Mandan-Hidatsa have a tremendous elaboration of joking relationships
 which serve as a very effective mechanism of enforcing conformity to group
 norms.

177 By the time the unacculturated child becomes an adult, he has been so
 867 effectively socialized to Indian ways that white contact has very little in-
 fluence. But the adult reality is such that he must live in a superordinate white
 world. This is the sharp discontinuity in his life career. Every Indian must deal
 with members of white society in order to perform necessary economic and
 educational activities. The unacculturated Indian does not change himself
 to become like a white person; instead he learns how to adjust to white
 people. One informant described the technique as follows: "We Indians are
 just like those lizards that change their colors. When we are with whites we
 act one way and when we are with Indians we act another way." I think this
 kind of compartmentalized behavior is called "situational role specificity"—
 but possibly the analogy of the chameleon has a virtue of its own. In a sense,
 the unacculturated people of Lone-Hill come to learn two cultures, but it is a
 177 case of differential learning with different points of origin. The unacculturated
 154 Indian character is incorporated into the child in his formative years, while a
 867 superficial knowledge of white culture and of the techniques of adjustment to
 white people are learned primarily in adulthood. The unacculturated people of
 Lone Hill are not torn with inner conflict between two worlds; they just in-
 ternalize the Indian way as children and learn aspects of the white way as a
 necessary accessory when they become adults. Erikson (1950:115) in his
 study of the Sioux was intrigued by this point:

This, it seemed to us, was the most astonishing single fact to be investigated: That
 Indian children could live for years without open rebellion or any signs of inner conflict
 between two standards which were incomparably further apart than those of any two
 generations or two classes in our culture.

177 The unacculturated Indian does not internalize white ways as an adult, not
 563 because all learning stops in childhood, but because of the vast cultural differ-
 ences between members of the two groups, the nature of the situations in
 which adult Indian-white interaction occurs, and the attitudes of white